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RUEH RN/USMISSION UN ROME 0028
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RUEA IIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEK DIA/DIA WASHDC
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RUEH PH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEH RC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002539

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USDA FAS WASHDC FOR FAA/RANDY HAGER
USDA FOR APHIS/JOHN SHAW
USDA FOR WAYNE MOLSTAD/OSEC
USAID/W FOR AFR/WA ANGELA LOZANO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [AMED](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [NI](#) [AVIANFLU](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA AVIAN FLU: ANIMAL-SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

REF: ABUJA 2535

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11. Summary. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture launched on Sept. 21 their EU/USG-funded program for active animal surveillance of the avian influenza (AI) in Nigeria. Training would precede fieldwork, which would cover all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory and be overseen by the Abuja office of the FAO/Pan-African Program for the Control of Epizootics. The plan is for 208 veterinarians to carry out the surveillance. The Minister of State for Agriculture was more optimistic than was the Chief Veterinary Officer about Nigeria's achievements to date against AI. End summary.

12. At a ceremony at the UN House in Abuja, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) launched on Sept. 21 the European Union (EU)/USG-funded FAO-MOA program for active animal surveillance of the avian influenza (AI). An FAO official said it was not clear whether Nigeria had controlled AI's spread, or whether AI's extent just had not been detected. The new surveillance program would operate in all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and would collect samples for laboratory diagnosis from commercial farms, live bird markets, and selected villages. Overall coordination would be carried out by the Abuja office of the FAO/Pan-African Program for the Control of Epizootics. The plan is for 208 veterinarians to carry out the surveillance. The EU provided \$546,000 to fund the program. The U.S. Government has allocated \$1 million, to be provided through USAID, to support the active-surveillance program. This amount, documents for which await FAO officials' final signature, will complement the EU's donation and in particular will support an AI information center and strengthening testing laboratories' capabilities. Field staff would be trained Sept. 23-29, field work would be conducted Oct. 11-Dec. 11, laboratory diagnosticians would be trained Oct. 24-26, and an assessment of Nigeria's laboratory capabilities would finish by Dec. 29.

13. The Minister of State for Agriculture reviewed AI in Nigeria and said a surveillance team "stumbled" on the first case of AI in the country at the Sambawa Farms in late January 2006. He asserted,

however, that Nigeria's anti-AI efforts since then had been a success, with AI confirmed in "only" 14 states and the FCT. He said by "all indications," the virus was "not very active" in Nigeria except in Lagos State and AI so far had affected fewer than 1 million birds. The Government of Nigeria (GON) had approved 400 million naira (\$3.13 million) for "immediate" action against AI and for paying compensation to poultry farmers. The government's goal was for Nigeria to be declared "AI free."

14. The Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) said Nigeria had 140 million poultry birds, of which 25% were in the commercial sector, 15% in the semi-commercial sector, and 60% raised by backyard farmers. He said the GON did not know how AI entered the country - whether through wild migratory birds or through infected birds smuggled into Nigeria. The GON was attempting to identify the country's first (index) case of AI, which might not have been at the Sambawa Farms, through comprehensive contact tracing. The CVO termed Ogun State's outbreak of AI "no longer active" because it occurred in July. Only Lagos State was a "current-outbreak state." He said AI likely had affected more than 1 million birds in Nigeria.

15. The CVO reviewed whether the GON should support poultry vaccinations and said these, which are being administered unofficially, "must stop for now." Vaccinations must not be supported or ruled out flatly; rather, evidence must support the case for using or not employing vaccinations.

16. The CVO said surveillance must be taken down to the state level to be effective. He said the GON must increase: the participation of private veterinarians and private laboratories in fighting AI; controls on the movement of poultry and on live poultry markets; communication within the veterinary profession and its professional bodies; subjecting the government's AI response plan to public scrutiny and debate; pressing Nigeria's states to view efforts against AI as an issue of good government and to fund these; and "constantly" reminding citizens of the dangers of AI. The CVO did not praise Nigeria's accomplishments against AI effusively but

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rather termed these "reasonable achievements."